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Lancaster Sound, a magnificent part of Canada's High Arctic, poses a great challenge for Canadians in planning for the future uses of our natural resources. Ecologically, the Sound is possibly the richest, most productive area in all the Arctic. The Sound is also the entrance to the famous Northwest Passage, and as such, is a potential transit route for increased shipping if industrial development of any kind proceeds in the Arctic. Since the Sound also holds a hydrocarbon potential of its own, important decisions have to be made about the safety of possible oil and gas exploration and development here, as Canada pursues its national objective of energy self-sufficiency. And weighing heavily in the balance of considerations for future uses of Lancaster Sound area the interests of the native Inuit who continue to depend on the area's resources.

The Lancaster Sound Regional Study was established to clearly identify all the issues affecting the future of Lancaster Sound, and to arrive at some feasible options for the use of the region to assist the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in his deliberation on the future use and management of the Sound. The Study evolved from the public hearings held in 1978 to examine an application by Norlands Petroleum Ltd. for permission to drill an exploratory well in Lancaster Sound. The panel of officials set up

under the federal Environmental Assessment and Review Process (EARP) to conduct the hearings concluded that a meaningful assesement of the environmental and socio-economic impacts of exploratory drilling in Lancaster Sound could not be made in isolation from the broader issues that affect all uses of the area. The panel recommended that a comprehensive review of the complex resource use problems in the Lancaster Sound region should be done by DIAND. This recommendation was accepted by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

The Lancaster Sound Regional Study thus was established by the Department to be undertaken in conjunction with the Government of the Northwest Territories, and the federal departments of Energy, Mines and Resources, External Affairs, Environmental, Fisheries and Oceans, National Defence, and Transport.

A regional planning approach was adopted to identify the significant issues facing the future use of Lancaster Sound, and to set the stage for comprehensive planning for the future of the region. An important element of this planning approach is the participation of the general public in the identification of the issues, and the subsequent formulation of the options. This participation is facilitated by a discusssion paper, the draft Green Paper, the principal outcome of the first phase of the Lancaster Sound Regional Study. By presenting a brief description of the region, and the issues considered to affect

it, the draft Green Paper can help the Canadian public to participate in this planning process in an informed manner. During the second phase of the Study, the public review phase, members of the public will be encouraged to express their views, comments and suggestions by responding to the question:

"WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE WOULD BE OUR BEST PLAN FOR LANCASTER SOUND?"

Background Information

A Working Group, consisting of representatives from the participating departments, undertook the compilation of a detailed data base of available information on the region. This data base outlines the present state of knowledge of Lancaster Sound, as it relates to regional planning objectives, and consists of the following materials:

- (i) A preliminary data atlas of 83 thematic maps at a scale of 1:2 million - with titles and legends in English, French and Inuktitut - summarizes information on the region. This atlas is accompanied by a set of map descriptions (also in 3 languages) which outlines, for each map, relevance to the Study, key information presented, and quality or completeness of the data. The map deal with important coastal and oceanic processes, animals and their habitats and functions, resource harvesting areas, and commercial activities. They also illustrate potential activities in the region over the next twenty years

such as shipping, hydrocarbon exploration, and parks and reserves. All the maps can be easily updated, if needed, to incorporate new data obtained during the public review phase;

- (ii) Five background reports, consisting of 12 individual papers, provide more detailed information, particularly on topics unsuited for cartographic representation. These reports deal with the following topics: Selected Physical Characteristics; Selected Biological Characteristics; Socio-Economic Characteristics and Conservation Interests; non-renewable Resources and Transport; Jurisdictions and Legislation.

The information summarized in the Background Reports and presented in the Preliminary Data Atlas provides the background for the draft Green Paper.

The Present Situation

In the draft Green Paper, the Working Group briefly outlines the present situation of Lancaster Sound by looking at the physical make-up of the region, and by reviewing biological features, hunting, fishing and trapping and current commercial activities, as well as social and economic considerations. These regional characteristics have been illustrated in coloured "composite maps" derived from superimposed maps of individual variables derived from the preliminary

data atlas. It was convenient to describe this complex region according to typical conditions encountered during winter and summer, however, this simplification did not affect later analysis which took into account the seasonality and variability so characteristic of the region.

Future Uses

Next, the Green Paper looks at what activities would take place in certain parts of the Lancaster Sound bound region during the next twenty years. The Working Group began by looking at those major industrial ventures that are already being actively pursued (Mining) and those that have been proposed for possible implementation in the near future (year-round shipping, hydrocarbon exploration and development). Also dealt with are such uses as the establishment of national parks and other forms of conservation areas, as well as activities which are more closely related to the present lifestyle of the Inuit residents, such as the development of community-based tourism and the harvesting of fish and wildlife.

Each of these activities is examined in the light of the benefits which they would bring to the local residents and the Canadian economy as a whole. The major features of each activity are described, together with a brief assessment of its likely economic, social and environmental implications. It is from this review that some major

issues emerge which must be addressed with regard to the future use and management of the region.

Questions About Future Directions

Before it can be identified which options for use of the region should be sent to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development for his consideration, it is necessary to hear from the public. It is apparent that there is no single public view in Canadian Society, but rather a spectrum of different perspectives. Each of these perspectives is thought to incorporate four main concerns, although, in varying degrees. These four concerns are: the National Interest, Protection of the Environment, Lifestyle Flexibility, and Use of Appropriate Technology. To be able to determine the best uses for the Lancaster Sound region, it is essential that these different views be voiced during the public discussion so that all concerns may be given careful attention.

To help the public make suggestions for the use and management of the Lancaster Sound region for the next twenty years, the draft Green Paper presents some basic questions about the directions which might be taken. Each of the questions presented includes an outline of relevant implications, and a brief evaluation according to the four concerns referred to previously. These questions are seen only as a starting point for public discussions in workshops and community meetings during the 2nd phase of the Study.

The four questions presented for discussion are:

Question 1: Should new major industrial development be deferred until safer technology and greater understanding of environmental, social, and economic relationships are available?

Question 2: Should parks and reserves be formally designated before new industrial development is allowed?

Question 3: Should shipping be expanded at this time to include year-round transport of oil and gas?

Question 4: Should there be a determined program to explore and develop the resources of the Lancaster Sound region?

Discussion stimulated by these questions during the public review phase will help to identify a clear-cut set of options to be evaluated in deciding on the future uses of the Lancaster Sound region. Inputs received during the Study's public review phase will contribute to the development of the final version of the Green Paper which will present these options. This final document is expected to assume a significant role in the formulation of a regional plan for Lancaster Sound.

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